

Idaho, Sydney Smith of Claremont McKenna College, Victoria Izaguirre of Texas A&M University, and Zach Blair-Andrews of University of South Florida.

“Public Service Review” provides these young leaders an opportunity to write about their experiences and inspirations in their own words, sharing stories of challenge and hope as they engage in public service in a variety of formats and focus on a range of causes that draw their passion. Not only do their stories inspire those of us engaged in public service here in Congress and elsewhere, but their experiences provide insights and guidance for younger students as they look for ways to become involved in public service.

On behalf of my colleagues, who I serve with on the Stennis Center Board of Trustees, U.S. Senator ROGER WICKER, Tom Daffron, U.S. Representative TERRI SEWELL, and former U.S. Representative Martha Roby, I commend the Stennis Center for this excellent publication and urge you to read it and share it with others who will benefit from reading these inspiring stories.

RECOGNIZING 100 YEARS OF THE “FLYING YANKEES”

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, today I rise to recognize the 103rd Airlift Wing of the Connecticut Air National Guard—the “Flying Yankees”—as they celebrate 100 years of dedicated service to the State and our Nation.

The Flying Yankees are the 11th oldest Air National Guard unit in the United States, including a squadron that has served more than 90 years in military aviation. Operating from the Bradley Air National Guard Base in East Granby, CT, the 103rd Airlift Wing provides tactical airpower and mission support for the State and Nation. The unit carries out this critical mission through highly qualified and proficient C-130 aircrew.

The 103rd Airlift Wing has a history that dates back to the earliest years of military aviation, and the Flying Yankees have fought bravely in numerous conflicts throughout the last century. From their efforts in France during World War I, to their heroic service in the China-India-Burma theater of operations during World War II, the Flying Yankees have a long history of valiantly serving our Nation both at home and abroad. The unit’s service continued through the Cold War and more recent conflicts. The Flying Yankees innovate to meet the changing needs of the State and the Nation, carrying on their great tradition of dedicated service to this day.

For a century, the brave members of the 103rd Airlift Wing of the Connecticut Air National Guard have embodied their motto—“faithful and alert”—answering the call to service for both Connecticut and the Nation. I applaud their determination and dedication to the vital mission of defending

our country and hope my colleagues will join me in congratulating the Flying Yankees on this momentous occasion of their 100th anniversary.

TRIBUTE TO PEARSON RIDDLE, JR.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I rise today to honor a great North Carolinian, courageous veteran, and the last living survivor of the Battle of Wake Island: Pearson Riddle, Jr.

Born in Pensacola, NC, on October 15, 1921, Pearson joined the Civilian Conservation Corps at 18 years old upon completing high school. After spending time in Oregon and California learning to operate heavy machinery, he was sent to Hawaii to work for the U.S. Navy and later joined the Wake Island workforce in August 1941 as a general laborer, providing essential support services to U.S. Armed Forces.

On December 8, 1941, Japanese forces commenced a successful siege of Wake Island despite the valiant efforts of marines, sailors, soldiers, and civilians. Pearson was among the hundreds of civilian contractors captured by Japanese forces on December 23, 1941. Forty-four months of grueling captivity and infamous brutality followed.

Pearson was kept on Wake Island until early 1942, when the Japanese forced POWs to board the *Nitta Maru*, which was destined for a prison camp in Woosun, China. After spending 19 months there in forced labor, the Japanese shipped Pearson and hundreds of other POWs to Kobe, Japan, and again to Tokyo where he was imprisoned until a May 1945 Allied bombing destroyed the prison camp. Sent north to Sendai 7-B Hanaoka after the successful Allied bombing, Pearson and the remaining POWs were liberated in September 1945.

Malnourished, ill, and abused, it took Pearson 2 years to make a full recovery, and despite lifelong medical complications from his imprisonment, Pearson never stopped serving. After his service, Pearson went on to build bases around the world, including in north Africa and Iceland.

In 1987, the Navy administratively awarded Pearson the rank of E-4 and evaluated him as a 100 percent wartime service-connected disabled veteran. Seventy-seven years after his liberation, Pearson received the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, World War II Victory Medal, and American Campaign Medal for his heroic devotion to duty.

Today, we honor Pearson Riddle, Jr.’s valor, service, and commitment to the values and principles of the United States of America. I ask my fellow Senators to join me in saluting Pearson Riddle for his service.

TRIBUTE TO MAYA ASHWAL

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I rise today, with a unique combination of joy, sorrow, and pride. For the last 8

years, Maya Ashwal has been my right arm in the Senate, serving as my director of scheduling and operations in our Washington office.

I rise with joy today because my life and the lives of everyone who works in or with our office has been made better by Maya Ashwal. Maya is this wonderful combination of hard-nosed, no-nonsense grit, and gracious compassion. She brings a seriousness of purpose to her work, but she treats everyone around her with kindness and caring. Over the last 8 years, I watched Maya overcome obstacles that would have swallowed up lesser people. She has persevered through personal loss, finding a way to grow her compassion for others in the face of tragedy. She has conquered a litany of bad health luck, at one point finding herself stuck in South America dealing with a serious health emergency. Somehow, we all knew that Maya would find a way to come back stronger, with a smile on her face.

Through it all, it has been so wonderful to watch her grow as a person. Since she has been with our office, Maya has gotten married to Jeremy and welcomed a gorgeous daughter, Piper, into the world in the middle of the pandemic. She is a wonderful mother, who deftly balances work and family life.

But I also rise with sorrow today, because it is hard for me to imagine life without Maya. My colleagues will understand how a great scheduler or great assistant ends up becoming an extension of you, a part of you. That is what Maya is. She knows my preferences before I speak anything out loud. She guesses what I need before I know I need it. She smooths over bumps and rough spots before they are visible to me.

But she also provides great advice and counsel. I am lucky that we share many passions—like mental health and gun safety—and Maya has become a whip smart political counselor who I rely on to make sure that my daily agenda best aligns with my policy goals. The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act could not have happened without Maya’s leadership. Never before has such a complicated bill been written and passed in such a short amount of time. Over 30 days and countless meetings, zooms, and phone calls—with advocates, Senators, House Members, staff, administration officials—we negotiated, wrote, and passed the most serious gun safety bill in three decades. During that time, Maya was the air traffic controller for the negotiations, managing to create organization out of potential chaos. That bill is part of her legacy.

In addition to her work on policy, Maya has also been such a comfort to my family. Being a parent of young children, with a wife who works equally long hours, is an unsurprising anomaly in the Senate. Maya’s job over the last 8 years has been made infinitely harder since my schedule has had to

balance not just work obligations, but a myriad of sports practices, school events, playdates, and Cub Scout meetings. Never once has Maya balked at my insistence of putting my family first, ahead of the Senate. In fact, she has been instrumental in protecting and supporting my family, continually pushing back against the pressures to put the children second. When my wife Cathy learned of Maya's departure, she audibly gasped. She knew what a loss this would be for our family.

And finally, today, I also feel a ton of pride. I feel pride because Maya is part of what makes the Senate work. She believes that this place is still capable of great things, and she is committed to making our institution live up to its potential. After spending 16 years between our office and the office of former Senator Mark Begich, Maya could have high-tailed it for private sector pastures. But she didn't. She leaves our office to join Senator JOHN FETTERMAN as his new administrative director. The job of standing up a brandnew Senate office is a daunting one, but Maya doesn't shirk from the challenge. She wants the Senate to work, and she is willing to do the hard work to make this possible.

I also feel pride today in who Maya has become while she has worked in our office. As she proudly told me when she informed me of her next move, she has undergone the most important changes in her life during her time with our office. She was amazing when she showed up here, but I would like to think that she is even more amazing today. And maybe the people she has spent the last 8 years with have had a little to do with her growth. I hope she would say this is the case.

I am glad Maya isn't going far. I have a feeling she will be a part of my life and our team members' lives for a long time. I feel joy, sadness, and pride today, all at the same time. But mostly, I just feel lucky that for the last 8 years, I have had Maya Ashwal as my right arm.

TRIBUTE TO AMY BUTTON RENZ

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. President, I rise today to honor and recognize the wonderful career of Amy Button Renz.

Like many, Amy began her career in Washington, DC, where she interned for both Senator Bob Dole and Representative Garner Shriver during the summer of 1974. After graduating from Kansas State University in the spring of 1976, Amy came back to DC, where she worked for Senator Roman Hruska until his retirement that December. Her time in public service was not over, as she moved back to Kansas to work for State Senator Ron Hein during the 1977 legislative session.

After her time in the Kansas Statehouse, Amy began her career with the Kansas State University Alumni Association in 1977. She would be named president and CEO of the alumni association in 1994, becoming the first fe-

male alumni director in the history of the Big Eight and later the Big 12 conference. Throughout her career, she has been crucial in the development of programming efforts, most notably as the lead fundraiser for the alumni center building campaign as well as serving as the chair of several search committees that have brought key administrators to Kansas State University. She has raised millions of dollars for student scholarships, and has always put the students of Kansas State University first.

Amy has been recognized for her servant leadership ceaselessly. In 2009 she received the Staley School of Leadership Mike Holen Outstanding Leadership Award, and in 2012 she was selected for the Directors Award by the K-State Marching Band. That same year, she was the recipient of the inaugural Amethyst Award, the University's highest award honoring those for their extraordinary contributions to K-State. Her influence extends past the university, as she was recognized with the Lyle Butler Distinguished Leadership Award from the Manhattan Chamber of Commerce in 2020.

Amy is a third generation K-Stater, and has earned two degrees from the University, a bachelor's degree in political science and a master's degree in public administration. Her husband, Allen, is a K-Stater, as are her three children. Her last day at the Kansas State University Alumni Association will be on June 30th, 2023. Her leadership and devotion will certainly be missed, but always remembered.

I now ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Amy's outstanding career, as well as thank her for 45+ years of service to Kansas State University. Amy is a true inspiration to those around her, fighting ever fighting for a wildcat victory.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING QUBILAH JONES

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, today I rise to honor the life of Qubilah Jones who passed away on December 31, 2022, after a long battle with lymphedema.

Raised in Marianna, AR, Qubilah was called to serve others. She lived in Jonesboro, AR, but her heart touched people far beyond the city limits. Qubilah dedicated herself to her family and her community. She was an active member of Mount Zion Baptist, a published poet, and a passionate community service advocate.

Qubilah launched her broadcasting career as a radio host at the nonprofit radio station KLEK in 2016, where she became known as the Voice of Jonesboro. In this role, she worked to inform the community by conducting hundreds of interviews with nonprofit, faith-based, and government leaders in the region.

Even through her battle with lymphedema, those who knew Qubilah

best said she never let the disease stop her from making a positive difference. She led by example. In 2017, Qubilah was named Volunteer of the Year for the more than 2,000 hours of community service she provided, as well as encouraging others to get involved.

She was an inspiration to many with an official proclamation of Qubilah Jones Day in Jonesboro and her alma mater, Arkansas State University, having lit its library tower pink in her honor serving as evidence of her impact. Her advocacy for awareness and treatment of lymphedema, helped lead to passage of the Lymphedema Treatment Act days before her passing. This law will help support the needs of others living with this condition.

I join Qubilah's family, friends, and countless others in mourning her passing. She has left a tremendous legacy that will last for years to come.●

REMEMBERING QUBILAH JONES

• Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, as the new year began, an exceptional life tragically ended. The State of Arkansas lost a powerful voice and community leader when Qubilah Jones passed away, age 45, after a 14-year battle against lymphedema.

Qubilah was born in Corpus Christi, TX, but her legacy and her heart are in Jonesboro, AR. Qubilah was a daily companion to countless Arkansans as the host of KLEK's "Community Conversations," a morning show where she interviewed hundreds of leaders about faith, government, and community involvement.

Qubilah had a God-given gift for words, and she was a relentless advocate for northeast Arkansas. She was a pillar of her church, New Mount Zion Baptist Church, where she produced the church newspaper. She was a curious soul who returned to education later in life, put in the work, and ultimately earned undergraduate and graduate degrees from Arkansas State University and Grand Canyon University. She was the driving force behind community celebrations such as KLEK's award-winning Juneteenth in Jonesboro Celebration. She was a proud and active alumna of her sorority, Delta Sigma Theta. And perhaps above all, she was a loving mother to her son, Quante Jeffrey.

For these accomplishments, and for the more than 2,000 hours of community service that Qubilah performed, the city of Jonesboro named her Volunteer of the Year in 2017.

More incredible still, Qubilah accomplished these things while battling lymphedema, an incurable disease that slowly sapped her mobility and strength. She spoke often on her radio show and podcast about living with a serious illness, providing advice and consolation to those who had their own cross to bear. But even as the disease took its toll on her body, it could not wipe away her warm smile or infectious laughter. Qubilah's sister, Gwen